DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 888 HE 026 620

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TITLE A History of Minnesota Higher Education Policy. A Policy Analysis.
INSTITUTION Minnesota House of Representatives, St. Paul. Research Dept.
PUB DATE Jan 93
NOTE 35p.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; *Coordination; Educational Cooperation; Educational History; *Educational Policy; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Financial Policy; *Governance; Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; Institutional Mission; Policy Formation; State Action; State Aid; State Boards of Education; State Colleges; State Departments of Education; State Government; *State History; State Legislation; State Universities; Statewide Planning; *Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS *Minnesota

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the history of Minnesota's policies in higher education from the end of World War II to the present with emphasis on policies concerning coordination and governance. The paper summarizes decisions and recommendations and analyzes trends to gauge their effects and effectiveness over this time period. The paper begins with a brief overview of the three "eras" that characterize the direction of state policy. The campus era of 1946-1962 saw policy focused at the campus level and each campus operated as an independent entrepreneur. In the system era (1963-1983) authority for decisions and actions became concentrated more in the state governing boards and coordinating boards. The legislative era (1983 to the present) saw deeper legislative involvement in higher education policy on issues such as funding, enrollments, and access versus quality. Following the first section is an analysis of the historical trends and a discussion of possible alternative directions. The third section is a listing of policy recommendations and decisions since 1946. Each entry indicates the year and whether the legislature took action on the recommendation. The recommendations are grouped under statewide planning and cooperation, mission, structure, access, quality, funding and financial aid, and linkages with elementary and secondary education. (JB)

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A History of Minnesota Higher Education Policy

A Policy Analysis

January 1993

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Research Department
Minnesota House of Representatives

A History of Minnesota Higher Education Policy

A Policy Analysis

January 1993

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Introduction

Reorganization of government is a popular topic today, nationally and in Minnesota. At all levels, there is a scramble to find ways to better deliver services, to ensure accountability, to encourage risk taking, and to improve the quality of the services.

Higher education is not exempt from this movement. Following decades of growth and expansion, the 1980s brought a decline in resources and changes in enrollment that have led to a reevaluation in the 1990s of Minnesota's policy directions in this area and to calls for greater accountability in higher education. Part of the concern is a direct result of the budget shortfalls which have led to increased scrutiny of all government spending. The greater degree of autonomy traditionally afforded higher education in comparison to other state accounts coupled with the air of remoteness surrounding higher education has intensified the level of scrutiny. Additionally, the 1980s were a time of much discussion and debate about education reform which has continued into the 1990s resulting in more focused attention on the whole education enterprise.

Two recent proposals reflect the interest in restructuring: the merger of the state university, community college, and technical college systems scheduled to occur in 1995, and the governor's proposal to reorganize several programs and agencies relating to education and children's services, including the higher education coordinating board.

The history of higher education governance and coordination in Minnesota may be viewed as a pendulum that has been swinging toward more centralized authority and decision making. While structural change has occurred, it is the concentration of authority and decision making at the state level, rather than the structure itself, that has resulted in major change. Prior to the end of World War II, campuses were largely autonomous controlling their own missions, programs, employees, and finances. The need for massive expansion, beginning with the return of veterans and increasing with the baby boom, led to more concentration of authority with the governing boards. Efforts to respond to expected enrollment declines and to declining resources also led to centralization and eventually involved the legislature in more management decisions.

The concentration of authority in the governing boards was an effective response to the need for enrollment expansion and to the tremendous growth in campuses. Centralization was necessary to identify statewide needs and to respond to those needs in an efficient and cost effective manner. However, as the pendulum continues to swing toward centralization, there are costs in the loss of accountability at the campus level where the education is delivered.

Legislative involvement in managing and administering higher education carries additional costs because the time required for these responsibilities makes it increasingly difficult for the legislature to concentrate on its historic role of broad policymaking. This situation becomes even more costly because Minnesota, like many other states, lacks clear state objectives for higher education ("a philosophical yardstick" in the words of one senior college president). Without the context of these objectives with which to guide and evaluate proposed policies, legislative decisions sometimes are made that conflict with each other or undermine a desired outcome.

As attention becomes more focused on the quality of the services provided and the accountability of those providing the services, education experts and government officials are beginning to question whether the pendulum has swung too far. This shift in perspective results in greater scrutiny of reform measures that rely on more concentration of authority, such as the merger of the three systems.

This paper examines of the history of Minnesota's policies in higher education from the end of World War II to the present, focusing on coordination and governance activities. It was undertaken as an effort to understand the current confusion and criticism of higher education and to put these concerns into a useful perspective. The paper summarizes decisions and recommendations within policy areas over the last 45 years and analyzes the policy and decision making trends to gauge their effects and effectiveness over this time period. This involves looking at shifts in the direction of relationships among the state, system and campus levels, and shifts in the particular policies themselves.

Using this approach, we have identified three fundamental shifts in direction over the course of the last 45 years, or three "eras" that characterize the direction of state policy in higher education. Each of these shows the movement toward increasing state level decision making. This paper begins with a brief overview of each era and then the more detailed listing of actions and recommendations across the 45 year period. Following the listing, is an analysis of the historical trends in coordination and governance policy and a discussion of possible alternative directions that are being proposed or tried in other states or in related fields such as K-12 education.

1. Historical Eras

This section examines the trends in higher education policy by showing the occurrences within eras. In analyzing the directions of higher education policy, there appear to be three distinct eras over the last 45 years. These are characterized by changes in the direction of policy, particularly changes in the distribution of responsibility and decision making. We have characterized these as the campus era, the system era and the legislative era. For each period there is a brief overview of the climate and major changes, a description of the division of responsibilities among each level of authority, and a summary of the policy recommendations and decisions.

Campus Era

Overview

The period between roughly 1946 and 1962 could best be characterized as a "campus era" in which policy was primarily focused at the campus level and each campus largely operated as an independent entrepreneur. During this time the executive and legislative branches assumed a strong "hands off" approach to higher education. The legislature appropriated money and demanded an accounting of the spending, but specified little about the way it was to be spent. Few pieces of legislation were adopted relating to higher education policy or management.

Higher education policy during this era focused on the need for and development of a statewide comprehensive plan for higher education, including distinctive missions for each system and campus. Campus officials involved in policy development throughout the state acknowledged the importance of such a plan because it was the only mechanism to ensure that needs were met while resources were used widely.

Policy Actions

- **Statewide planning and coordination**
  Development of a comprehensive statewide plan for all higher education began with voluntary efforts led by the University of Minnesota, and with committees appointed to gather relevant facts, assess situations, and make recommendations. Significant research was conducted to determine the post war education needs of the state and later to gauge the needs of the young baby boom generation before its members reached college age. Voluntary and legislatively sanctioned committees and gubernatorial commissions reviewed this work and forged the beginnings of a statewide plan.

- **Mission**
  The history of mission differentiation parallels that of statewide planning. Although many campuses were expanding their services during this period, clear direction was set in the 1950 report of the governor's commission that both systems and campuses should focus on specific missions, avoid trying to serve all needs, and guard against duplication. Throughout the development of the coordinate campuses of the University of Minnesota and the evolution of teachers' colleges into state colleges, attention was focused on the distinctiveness of missions.

  Mission development was also stressed as junior colleges grew, although the distinction between their mission and that of the area vocational schools was not clear. Because both of these two year institutions were created at the school district level, it appears that their distinctiveness depended on whether a district created only one or both institutions. The legislature authorized the creation of vocational schools in 1945. Within a very few years, the first calls were heard for combining the functions or the institutions themselves where they were nearby.

- **Structure**
  In the late 1940s the University of Minnesota was the predominant educational institution, the only public access point to four year degrees in fields other than teaching. The teachers' colleges were a set of five institutions around the state dedicated to preparing future teachers. Junior colleges existed in several school districts outside the metro area, but Minnesota was behind other states in

the number of junior colleges available. Between 1918 and 1940, 17 junior colleges opened; by 1950 eight of these had closed. In 1945 the legislature authorized school districts to establish area vocational schools (AVS), which several did over the course of the next few years. Most enrollment in the AVS's was of secondary students learning job skills.

- **Access**
  The development of new campuses was a top priority in order to provide access to the coming influx of "baby boom" students. Location was determined in part by the "35 mile" rule developed in 1963 by the liaison committee. Today it is often assumed that state policy provided that a campus should be located within 35 miles of all state residents; the actual policy provided that new campuses should not be located within 35 miles of an existing campus (except in the metro area), should not be located in a community of less than 5000, and should not be located where there are fewer than 4000 9-12 grade students within 35 miles. Exceptions could be made in cases of severe geographical isolation.

Division of Responsibilities

	Responsibilities
Campuses	•Budgeting •Hiring •Mission development •Enrollment •Programs •Planning
Systems •Board of Regents (constitutionally based)	•Primarily functioned as a campus, rather than a system governing board for Twin Cities and (beginning in 1947) Duluth campuses
•Teachers' College Board (state college board after 1957)	•Functioned with little authority, set general policies usually as recommended by its campuses
Coordinating Body no formal coordinating agency	•Voluntary coordination, led by UM •Developed in late 1940's in response to need for statewide planning for expansion •At request of UM and teachers' colleges, legislature authorized them to form liaison committee to cooperatively develop state plan
Legislature provided appropriations to each campus; authorized study commissions and liaison committee (at request of higher education officials)	•Final approval of campus sites •General structure and mission of colleges where they were statutorily authorized

System Era

Overview

Between about 1963 and 1983, authority for decisions and actions became concentrated more in the state governing boards and coordinating boards and consequently less at the campus level.

In 1963, a state junior college board was created by the legislature and soon the junior colleges were a state "system" of education, no longer tied to local school districts. Authority for managing the colleges was vested in this new board. Together with a state liaison committee that helped coordinate education, this board recommended sites for the creation of new junior colleges.

During this same period, the state college board began to clamor for enhanced authority over its campuses, arguing that the growth had been so great that each campus was headed in a somewhat different direction and required more oversight and greater similarity of purpose. The legislature adopted language to strengthen the power of the board over its campuses, but much of the concentration of power was accomplished by the legislature moving from an appropriations model in which it directly funded each campus to a model in which a lump sum was appropriated to the governing board for it to allocate to each campus.

Concurrent with the strengthening of state level governing boards, the legislature chose to strengthen state level coordination by creating a permanent statutory coordinating commission. Unlike its predecessors which functioned as voluntary associations of campus representatives, the higher education coordinating commission (HECC) was mandated to coordinate planning and development and included membership of private citizens. HECC's powers were soon increased to include much greater overview of campus activity when the legislature gave them authority to review proposals for new and existing academic programs.

This era concluded in 1983 with the creation of another board -- the state board of vocational technical education. The technical schools were not completely removed from the authority of local school boards; governance was shared between the state and the local boards. Additional legislation was adopted in the same year to strengthen the power of all of the boards over allocation of appropriations and reorganization of campuses.

Policy Actions

- **Statewide planning and coordination**
  By the mid 1960s the planning and coordination structure was becoming formalized, with legislation specifying membership and particular duties which reduced roles for the post-secondary systems and campuses. At the same time much of the crisis to expand education had been met, with a variety of new campuses built or planned. This removed the pressure for planning. Little attention was paid to development of any planning until the late 1970s, at which time pressure was exerted for each system to plan, but calls were no longer heard for statewide comprehensive planning.

- **Mission**
  Mission differentiation was no longer a common theme. As with planning, this coincides with the formalization of coordination and the passing of the massive period of growth.

- **Structure**
  The junior college board was created to bring the number of systems to three. New campuses were created within each of the systems, especially in the junior college system and in the vocational technical area. Junior colleges were upgraded to community colleges (1973) and state colleges became full-fledged liberal arts schools with a lessening of the demand for new teachers and the addition of some graduate level programs. To reflect this change, they were renamed state universities. Collective bargaining was authorized for faculty who organized into state bargaining units within the state university and community college systems. The state board of vocational technical education was created which resulted in a shared governance arrangement between this board and the local school boards with AVTI's in their districts.

- **Access**
  Access was expanded greatly throughout the state through the creation of numerous colleges, especially 2 year schools, and the expansion of programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Between 1962 and 1972, 31 junior colleges and AVTI's were established in the state.

  The 35 mile rule became less clear during this time. Following the earlier policy of the liaison committee, the legislature adopted law prohibiting subsidies to junior colleges established less than 36 miles from another campus. HECC, however, adopted a policy that some type of campus should be located within 35 miles of any town of 5000 or more and that a baccalaureate campus should be within 20 miles of any town of 10,000. The legislature's concern was to prevent encouraging the proliferation of junior colleges with the availability of state dollars; HECC's aim was to increase the ease of student access. Development went beyond the 35 mile access policies in parts of the state, usually by school districts creating vocational schools that were not subject to the legislative prohibition; Minnesota now has more 2 year campuses per capita than nearly any state in the country. Development was encouraged by the many towns who saw a college campus as an important asset to a community.

Division of Responsibilities

	Responsibilities
Campuses	•Proposing budgetary needs, program and degree plans to governing boards •Spending board allocation •Hiring faculty and campus administrators
Systems Regents, state college, jr. college boards; vocational board created in 1983	•Most budgeting and allocations •Approving campus program plans and missions •Establishing system mission and policies on enrollment levels and degrees
Coordinating Body Liaison committee, replaced by liaison/facilities comm. (1965), HECC (1967), renamed HECB (1975)	•Statewide planning •Reviewing new program proposals •Reviewing/recommending system budget proposals
Legislature	•Appropriating money to each system •Final approval of campus sites •General structural arrangements and missions, including powers and duties of governing and coordinating boards •Creation of new systems and boards

Legislative Era

Overview

During the 1980s, the legislature became more involved in higher education policy. 1983 was a critical point as it marked attempts to strengthen governing boards as well as legislative efforts to contend with a number of policy issues. Based on projections in the late 1970s of severe enrollment declines and of serious budget shortfalls in the early 1980s, the legislature adopted a new funding formula linking appropriation levels to enrollments.

By the mid 1980s things began to look up as the economy improved and enrollments grew. A gubernatorial commission encouraged the higher education systems to avoid closing campuses and to aggressively market their services and build enrollments. The systems took this advice to heart and, spurred on by an enrollment based funding formula, began to pursue greater numbers of students and to broaden the types of services and programs they offered.

By the late 1980s, legislators began to express concerns about these enrollment increases and their associated costs. More student complaints about inability to register in courses and loss of credit in transferring led the legislature to examine the systems more closely. Attention began to turn from access to the quality of the education offered.

Through much of the 1980s, the legislature expanded the responsibility of HECB to develop solutions to identified problems. It mandated the board to engage in specific activities and studies; however, these did not usually lead to policy changes. The University of Minnesota developed its own plan to manage its enrollment growth and shortage of resources, but the other systems continued in their patterns of growth. Increasingly the legislature looked for answers and searched for ways to manage the burgeoning systems. By the end of the 1980s, the state university system responded with a plan to manage its enrollments and focus its activities on undergraduate education.

The budget crisis of the early 1990s increased the presssure on the legislature to seriously consider major policy changes and to seek new ways of delivering higher education. In 1991, the legislature adopted a major reorganization plan merging the technical colleges, community colleges and state universities under one board to try to provide a governance structure that would be more responsive to the needs of the state, as identified by the legislature. In 1992 there were several house proposals to repeal or change the merger legislation but no similar language was adopted in the senate. At the same time, the technical colleges developed their own reorganization plan to move from the management of local school boards to a system of regional boards throughout the state.

Policy Actions

- **Statewide planning and coordination**
  Projections of enrollment decline led to new calls for planning; however, these were system plans, not statewide plans. Little attention was paid to the need for comprehensiveness or for studying statewide needs.

  The call for system plans continued until the late 1980s when it became clear to legislators that enrollment was growing instead of declining, the number of campuses, centers and capital requests was growing, and little coordination among the systems in planning or policy development was o1ccurring. At that time the legislature mandated the development of an intersystem plan under the

direction of HECB and instructed HECB to determine statewide needs for higher education.

- **Mission**
  Calls for mission differentiation resurfaced with the legislature in the 1980s. Initially these new efforts reflected the legislature's concerns about the prospect of declining enrollment and the competition for students that would emerge from the extensive mission overlap that had evolved.

  The concerns changed as enrollments burgeoned and legislators worried about the wastefulness of duplicating services and missions. Calls for greater economy and efficiency were made particularly during budget shortfalls and were aimed, for the most part, at the two year systems.

- **Structure**
  Several efforts were made by the legislature to reconfigure the arrangement of the four higher education systems and boards, with numerous proposals to merge two or more of the state boards and their associated campuses, primarily at the two year level. These proposals included enhanced authority of a governing board and/or greater oversight by the legislature. In 1991 the legislature finally adopted a plan to significantly overhaul the organization of higher education by combining the technical colleges, community colleges and state universities into one system under the authority of a new governing board beginning in 1995. The house voted to repeal or alter the merger in 1992 but the senate did not concur.

- **Access**
  The legislature began to critically examine policies expanding access as average cost funding encouraged greater expansion enrollments. Concerns began to focus on quality of the education.

Division of Responsibilities

	Responsibilities
Campuses	•Proposing budgetary needs, program and degree plans to governing boards •Spending board allocation •Hiring faculty and campus administrators
Systems Regents, state university board, community college board, vocational board (the latter three became one in 1995 under the merger)	•Budgeting and allocations •Approving campus program plans, policies on enrollment levels and degrees, establishing system mission and approving campus missions
Coordinating Body HECB	•Statewide planning, coordinating missions and policy development •Reviewing (after 1987, approving) new program proposals •Reviewing/recommending system budget proposals •Identifying policy issues
Legislature Appropriated money to each system	•Approving money to each system •Final approval of campus sites •General structural arrangements and missions, including powers and duties of governing and coordinating boards •Creation of new systems and boards •Overseeing board policies, identifying and analyzing policy issues, mandating HECB and governing boards to address issues

2. Policy Analysis and Implications

Analysis

The history of higher education policy displays a clear trend of moving decision making from the individual campus level to the state level, either in a board or legislative setting. This movement was spurred by factors such as projected budget deficiencies and enrollment declines, and it corresponded to the growth in the number of campuses which made oversight of activities difficult. Much of the motivation for centralization came from a desire on the part of state boards and government officials to improve their decision making and problem solving capacities and to better coordinate planning. Given the current level of skepticism surrounding higher education nationally and in Minnesota, it may be appropriate to consider whether centralization in coordination and governance has produced the type of results that were anticipated.

Coordination

Effective coordination, to some extent, is defined by its centralization; one cannot "coordinate" without it. The greater authority and recognition given to the coordinating activities in the 1950s and early 1960s was necessary to respond effectively to the demands for expansion of campuses and enrollments. State level involvement and planning are critical when decisions are needed regarding state needs and the allocation of state resources. It would logically follow that the elevation of coordination to a formal state level activity and organization would have made it more effective. However, many historical factors have weakened coordination efforts over the last 45 years. Chief among these factors are problems with the structure and functions of the coordinating bodies.

The replacement of voluntary coordination by campus and system officials with a formal citizen board charged by the state to coordinate, appears to have weakened rather than strengthened coordination efforts. This may be attributable to one or a combination of the following:

- a lack of "ownership" by the campuses and systems of plans or recommendations
- the inability of a lay board with no ties to systems or campuses to possess sufficient expertise to make realistic recommendations
- the inability of a board with no governance authority to follow through and implement any of its recommendations
- the remoteness of a state level agency from the day to day functioning of a campus
- the employment of planning professionals who have little actual campus based experience

The lack of effective coordination could increase problems facing decision makers: first, it may put the burden on them to determine for themselves emerging problems, issues and trends in higher education; second, it could deprive them of the kind of information necessary for sound decision making since little data or analysis is provided for planning or evaluating proposals; and third, it can made the implementation of statewide policies more difficult.

Governance

Concentrating more authority at the governing board and legislative levels, rather than the campus level, enabled the state to more effectively and efficiently meet the demand for expansion in the 1950s and 1960s. The mission of teacher colleges, for example, was changed into a more comprehensive liberal arts mission because of the increased need for this type of institution around the state. If each institution had total autonomy to determine its mission, the state would probably have had more difficulty in meeting the needs of growing numbers of students. Similarly, the task of appropriating money to each campus would have been nearly impossible for the legislature after the tremendous expansion of campuses. The greater concentration of authority at the governing board level enabled the legislature to appropriate to a board which in turn allocated money to each of its campuses.

However, when the pendulum swings too far toward centralizing authority, and campuses begin to lose their autonomy over the delivery of education, there is a greater risk of stifling innovation and creativity. Just as increased centralized coordination weakened its effectiveness, the greater concentration of governance at the state level, in some respects, has weakened the delivery of higher education in the state. This may be illustrated most clearly by the change in the authority of campus presidents. Many experts argue that the most critical factor affecting the quality of education is the leadership on a campus, because it is the leadership that produces the direction in hiring talented, creative faculty and in inspiring and rewarding that faculty for exciting teaching and research. Centralization has weakened the effect of this leadership by removing the autonomy that presidents need to chart the course of their campuses. A former president of a state campus remarked that the only real authority he had was to decide whether to close his campus during a storm, but he later lost even that authority to a state agency. Without autonomy, presidents cannot be held accountable by the systems or the state for the failure to provide quality education.

The decline in the level of accountability of campuses might be considered the most significant repercussion of centralizing decision making. Systems and, to a lesser extent, campuses are held accountable in that they must face the legislature every year and demonstrate that they have spent their money honestly and in general have complied with legislative wishes. But as decision making and responsibility are removed from the level where the education is actually provided, there is less accountability for the type and quality of that education. Without responsibility and authority there can be no accountability.

The movement of decision making and campus allocations to the state level has removed incentives from campuses to develop and pursue a unique mission or vision. Systems tend to seek uniformity because it is easier to manage; attempts to be different may be discouraged because they can result in competition among campuses and complaints of favoritism against the central administration. In this way, systems are motivated to preserve the status quo, which can lead to protecting weaker campuses and rewarding stronger ones to engage in business as usual. Innovation may be discouraged by the risk of fiscal punishment. This can occur both at the system level when officials face the legislature and at the campus level when presidents face their boards and the allocation processes.

When the legislature appropriated funding directly to each campus, it encouraged the campuses to differentiate themselves from one another, seeking to demonstrate to the legislature that they each had a unique identity and needs deserving consideration in funding decisions. Appropriations to each system may remove those incentives, particularly when the budgets are based on a funding formula that rewards increased enrollments, thereby encouraging a general curriculum with broad based appeal. If one campus is attracting students with a particular program, each campus is motivated to duplicate that effort. This can serve to discourage campuses from attracting certain types of students or building on campus strengths.

Another significant effect of centralization is on the legislature itself. The movement of decision making from the campus level to the state level has placed more responsibility on the legislature to be knowledgeable about numerous details of the operations and budgets of each system and campus. Combined with its assumption of increased coordinating and policy research functions, the legislature is carrying so many responsibilities that it is left with little time to thoughtfully discharge its major role of providing general state objectives and policy decisions.

Policy Implications

The trend to focus decision making activities at a more central level is one that has been common in the public and private sectors since the end of World War II. It is not surprising that higher education followed that trend. Recently, however, this arrangement has been reevaluated, resulting in many businesses and governmental organizations opting for decentralization of decision making.

This same reevaluation has begun in education. A few states and national experts have moved toward decentralized models of authority and decision making. If Minnesota policymakers were interested in trying to address some of their concerns about higher education in the state, there are several models they might consider. One option would be simply to redefine the levels of responsibility. By more clearly delineating the roles and responsibilities at the legislative, system and campus levels, the legislature could increase and reward accountability to promote actions that are in the interest of the state and its students. For example, legislative responsibilities might include the development of state policy objectives, adoption of policy decisions that support those objectives, and provision of a stable and rational funding base that works in concert with the objectives and the policies. System responsibilities might focus on financial and programmatic support of its campuses and the buffering of those campuses from unwarranted intrusion. Campus responsibilities could rest in the development of a mission and vision that meet statewide needs and objectives and the provision of quality programs within that mission. This model of delineation allows for two levels of policy development -- statewide at the legislature and systemwide at the system office -- and two levels of policy implementation and management -- systemwide at the system office and campuswide at each campus.

Strengthening system and campus autonomy requires a high degree of trust in campus and system administrators. In general there is a good relationship between the legislature, systems and campuses in Minnesota. But some experts argue that even where relationships are fundamentally strong, they could be enhanced by adopting a strategy that clearly differentiates the missions and responsibilities of each. The state of Washington is undertaking efforts in this direction by proposing the legislative enactment of a compact among the campuses, systems and legislature in which each commits to certain types of actions and responsibilities, and each in turn is held accountable for that commitment. This approach is intended to guarantee quality in a system which functions better under a basic premise of variety than one of uniformity.

Another option would be to consider the national move in K-12 education toward "site-based management." This is a model in which decision making that had been focused at the state or local school board level is moved to the actual school level. The objective of this approach is to place responsibility in the hands of those whose job it is to educate -- teachers, counselors, principals and other school administrators. At the same time it places accountability for quality education on those same people. This approach has not really penetrated higher education circles, yet the same principle could be applied: the state can adopt general policies, while leaving the implementation of those policies to be adapted to the needs and environments of different campuses. This provides for the flexibility to fashion a different response at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus than at the Morris campus. Proponents of site-based management argue that if decisions are made by the campus community itself to fit the distinct needs and abilities of that community, the state is more

likely to get solutions that will be supported and will work because the campus has designed an answer to its own problem.

Aims McGuinness, director of higher education policy at the Education Commission of the States (ECS), recently put forward a more radical proposal. McGuinness argues that most states are continuing to further centralize, with their legislatures more and more involved in "micromanagement". He sees this as a serious threat to quality education, not because legislators intend harm, but because they lack the detailed knowledge, skills and time to truly manage, and because their management could jeopardize academic freedom. To counter this trend, McGuinness suggests abolishing system offices altogether because he sees them as propping up weak campuses, standing in the way of strong campuses, and facilitating micromanagement by eliminating the need to manage many separate campuses. In place of systems, he calls for formulating a statewide master plan that spells out the mission of each campus. The legislature would then make policy decisions and fund each campus in light of this plan. Campuses would implement legislative policy and make programmatic and other management decisions in accordance with their missions. Supported by strong, ongoing documentation of statewide needs, the plan could be updated as needs change, and campuses could then modify their missions over time as necessary.

While the efforts to decentralize decision making authority in higher education are still quite new, evidence indicates that interest in this area is growing. When McGuinness (with assistance from Peter Ewell of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems - NCHEMS) presented his proposal at the annual ECS meeting this summer, it was clear that not everyone in the audience agreed with his plan. However, it was also clear that he inspired a number of legislative and education people to begin to think in new ways and to question some basic assumptions about the current structure of governance and coordination.

3. History of Policy Recommendations

This section presents a history of the policy recommendations and decisions in Minnesota from 1946 to the present. It is organized chronologically within particular policy areas. Each entry is shown with the year of the recommendation or decision. If the legislature took action, it is indicated in the text; if the recommendation or decision was made by a group outside the legislature it is from one of the sources listed below. This particular source can be identified by the year in which the recommendation or decision is listed.

Sources of Recommendations and Decisions:

Minnesota Laws and Statutes

1950 Governor's Commission (Schweickhard Commission)
1956 Governor's Commission (Gale Commission)
1959 Liaison Committee
1963 Liaison Committee
1965 Liaison and Facilities Commission
1969 Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)
1971 HECC
1973 HECC
1975 HECC
1977 Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB)
1984 Governor's Commission (Anderson Commission)
1992 Governor's Commission (Levi Commission)

Statewide Planning and Cooperation

1946

State Teachers' College Board endorses a joint registration plan with the U of M so that students are able to complete two years general education at teachers' college and transfer to U of M with no credit loss.

1950

Governor's commission finds state needs can be met without centralized control if every college concentrates on doing what it does best in accordance with a statewide plan.

Governor's commission states coordination is necessary to effectively meet state needs, avoid costly duplication, improve communication, conduct research and develop statewide plans. Must be voluntary since an authoritarian agency would lead to state control of education. Most important function would be statewide planning to provide for an overall program of higher education in the state, more effectively utilize existing resources, and determine important or changing needs. Legislature should establish a permanent research and planning body.

1956

Gale commission recommends voluntary coordination should continue through groups such as the Association of Minnesota Colleges, but U of M and teachers' colleges jointly should establish a liaison committee with representation of junior colleges from the department of education. Legislature should provide limited funding for lay citizens' committees to help citizens understand the problems of higher education.

1959

Liaison committee finds U of M should look for ways to provide general education, liberal arts, and preprofessional education in cooperation with other colleges to avoid pressure to expand too much.

Legislative resolution establishes liaison committee in statute to provide for joint/long range planning and coordination. Authorizes three representatives each of U of M, state colleges and board of education to form committee (committee later added junior colleges, private colleges).

1963

Liaison committee states its primary goal is to develop comprehensive plan for state to do long-term planning.

Liaison committee recommends legislature should fund full-time research staff and combine liaison committee with new gubernatorial- established facilities authority. (Legislature combined these in 1965.)

1965

Liaison and facilities commission states best way to fulfill planning responsibilities is through establishment of a comprehensive state plan.

1967

Legislature replaces liaison/facilities commission with Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC); charges it to study, analyze all of higher education and continuously engage in long-range planning.

1969

HECC states when need is established in an area for a new institution it should be based on the special needs of the area and considered in context of the total needs of the state.

HECC recommends its responsibilities should be delineated to focus the commission's attention on program planning, budgeting and new institutions. Legislature should give HECC program and site approval authority.

HECC finds better distribution of students among instructional levels should be achieved by 1980. The U of M should be 33% upper division and 33% graduate. State colleges should be 56% lower division, 32% upper division, and 12% graduate.

1971

HECC requests the 1971 legislature give them statutory authority for program, site, and budget review. Legislature removes all higher education affiliated members, replaces them with additional citizen members, and grants program review authority.

Legislature authorizes faculty to engage in collective bargaining.

HECC recommends legislature should authorize contract with private colleges: $500 per student for BA, $400 per student for AA for each Minnesota student in excess of fall 1970 enrollment and an equal amount for every student at a private college who receives Minnesota grant-in-aid without regard to previous enrollment. (Similar provision enacted same year.)

HECC encourages cooperation between higher education institutions and AVTIs that are located in the same or neighboring communities.

1973

HECC recommends establishment of regional advisory pilot projects (Iron Range, Rochester, Wadena) to facilitate inter-institutional coordination and cooperation.

HECC states no new AVTIs should be authorized until greater need and feasibility are evident.

1975

HECC recommends development of interstate planning mechanisms with Wisconsin, and reciprocity with Iowa and South Dakota.

HECC finds change in directions occurring with more part-time students, off campus programs, relaxed administration.

Legislature changes name of HECC to HECB.

1977

HECB recommends continuation of expansion of credit transfer.

HECB projects FYE to decline from 1982-95 going back to approximately 1970 enrollment; some institutions will experience a temporary bulge; precipitous closings should be avoided; adjustments in program resources is responsibility of institutional governing boards.

HECB requests each governing board to submit a comprehensive report on plans for program adjustment, staffing, funding requirements and facilities for changing enrollments of the 1980s.

Commission on Minnesota's Future reports that Minnesota post-secondary education policy has two main dimensions: provision of educational opportunities and access. State has overbuilt physical plant -- some capacity may never be used. Beginning in the early 1980s, enrollment declines lasting 15 years or more will begin; widespread geographic distribution of facilities has had little positive effect on student access, but has resulted in higher cost. State must consider consolidation of institutions, and adopt a tuition policy that reflects cost of instruction.

1979

HECB recommends each system develop a five-year plan, including mission review.

1981

Legislature requires post-secondary systems to plan for responding to expected enrollment declines.

1983

Legislature requires systems to engage in ongoing short and long-term planning, including examining enrollment and missions and developing plans for programs, staff and facilities. Focus on mission differentiation strengthened in later years.

Legislature directs HECB to study timely completion and student progress.

1984

Andersen commission requests each system governing board and the Private College Council to add non-voting members to HECB and extend HECB terms to six years.

1987

Legislature strengthens HECB authority to direct development of intersystem plans.

Legislature directs HECB to assess implications of changing definition of full-time used in state grant program from 15 to 12 credits.

1988

Legislature directs HECB to conduct a major study of higher education needs in two phases: 1) metropolitan corridor, 2) remainder of state.

1989

Legislature requires systems to study and plan for: quality education on each campus experiencing growth; mechanisms to encourage timely completion; and preparation requirements to improve academic readiness of entering students.

1990

Legislature requires each governing board to develop a plan for managing its enrollments and to submit plans for providing undergraduate and practitioner graduate programs in the metro area.

Legislature begins to provide greater oversight of off-campus development and enrollment and strengthens HECB's program and site approval authority.

1991

HECB recommends in its MSPAN 2 report that no new campuses be created, better planning be done through greater attention to demographics, and Metro State be expanded into a comprehensive 4 year institution.

1992

Levi commission recommends that: state policies be explicit; systems be held responsible for finding ways to implement those policies; and cooperation be improved by establishing regional advisory boards.

Mission

1945

Legislature authorizes U of M to start school of law enforcement. (This occurred biennially for 30+ years.)

1950

Governor's commission finds many colleges should offer two year general education programs, in some fields combined with vocational. Wherever the general education is offered, it should be basically the same, although colored by distinctive characteristics of the college.

Governor's commission recommends all colleges should provide service by making faculty experts available to consult on community problems.

Governor's commission states colleges should not expand to fill all needs in their service areas, but should provide superior performance of special functions within a statewide pattern of higher education. Each college should develop individuality, but unity of purpose and cooperation will multiply results. Uncoordinated, some needs will go unmet and other efforts will be duplicated.

Governor's commission recommends upper division liberal arts should be offered by private colleges, U of M, and some of the teachers' colleges.

Governor's commission suggests two year programs combining vocational and general education should be expanded to provide for students who don't want or need four year degrees. This should be a major effort of junior colleges which should be provided state aid as a supplement to local money.

Governor's commission states some provision should be made in junior colleges for students who want a four year degree but cannot go directly to four year colleges.

Governor's commission recommends teachers' colleges expand liberal arts programs to provide general education and access to local area students who are not in teacher education. Study whether to continue four year liberal arts after immediate post war needs have been met.

1956

Gale commission recommends state funds for research, graduate education and advanced professional education should be limited to U of M. U of M must focus on upper division, graduate and professional; relief for enrollment must be at lower division level through expansion of junior colleges and expansion of other four year programs.

1959

Liaison committee recommends state colleges should continue to stress teacher education, but development in other areas should differ from college to college, respond to regional needs, and avoid duplication and overlap. Explore development of cooperative graduate programs with the U of M.

1963

Liaison committee suggests U of M should consider experimenting with liberal arts at Morris.

Liaison committee states that campuses must develop distinct missions because resources are limited as are quality faculty in any field. Missions should be as follows:

Area Vocational Schools -- equip young people for useful or profitable employment
Junior Colleges -- meet local needs, emphasis on general education, employable skills
State Colleges -- baccalaureate level in liberal arts/sciences, teacher education
University of Minnesota -- liberal arts/sciences; applied sciences; professional, graduate education
Private Colleges -- emphasis on liberal arts

Liaison committee finds that after area vocational schools were authorized (1945), most enrollment was secondary students. By mid-1960s, only Minneapolis still has a majority of secondary students.

1971

HECC recommends state should discourage unwarranted proliferation of occupational programs.

1981

Legislature authorizes AVTIs to grant associate degrees under certain conditions.

1983

Legislature funds development of engineering programs at St. Cloud St., Mankato St. and U of M, Duluth.

1984

Andersen commission recommends providing non-traditional programs for adult learners, encouraging life-long learning, upgrading research and graduate programs at the U of M, and differentiating missions among campuses.

1985

U of M produces commitment to focus plan to differentiate and concentrate its mission, reallocate its resources, strengthen its preparation requirements.

1988

U of M establishes applied graduate program in Rochester through its Institute of Technology.

1990

Winona State develops plans for the first residential college in the state.

Legislature directs each governing board to review its mission and recommend changes in light of mission differentiation efforts.

1991

HECB recommends that duplication of two year programs in the same geographic area be reduced and that the state universities discontinue two year degrees in occupational fields.

Legislature enacts missions for each system and directs HEAC to eliminate/transfer programs inconsistent with the missions.

Structure

1947

Legislature approves transfer of Duluth Teachers' College to U of M.

1956

Legislature should establish a state teachers' college board with comparable authority to Board of Regents and with necessary administrative staff. Teachers' colleges should continue to stress four and five year teacher preparation and closely related liberal arts, and two year general education for students in the area. May have to change name.

1957

Legislature changes name of Teachers' Colleges to State Colleges.

1959

Liaison committee suggests Board of Regents should develop collegiate programs at Crookston and Morris, and give Grand Rapids agricultural school to school district as a area vocational school.

Liaison committee states legislature should consider transferring state colleges to U of M to provide better coordination.

Liaison committee finds no new junior colleges have been established since 1940 and almost half of those established have closed, including a junior college in Duluth that closed after the transfer of Duluth Teachers' College to the U of M.

1963

Liaison committee recommends combining junior colleges and technical institutes located in same towns.

Liaison committee suggests a full-time coordinator for junior colleges should be appointed in department of education.

Legislature establishes state junior college board.

1966

Eveleth and Virginia community colleges merge to become Mesabi Community College.

1969

HECC states if a school board wants to merge co-located two year schools, they should discontinue the technical institute and the junior college should take over.

Liaison committee recommends that cooperation between co-located two year colleges should include: 1) joint program planning 2) shared faculty 3) student enrollment in both institutions 4) joint use of auxiliary facilities 5) cooperative extra-curricular programs.

1971

HECC suggests U of M campus in Rochester would provide strong support for undergraduate programs in medicine with the Mayo Clinic. A study should look at the effect of a Rochester U of M campus on Winona State and Rochester Junior College. Legislature should appropriate planning funds to U of M for study -- HECC should make recommendations to the legislature.

HECC recommends state junior college board, board for vocational education, and local school boards (outside metropolitan area) should develop plans to merge co-located two year campuses.

1973

HECC urges the boards of the junior colleges and AVTIs located in close proximity in areas of limited population to assess the possibilities of merging the two institutions.

Legislature changes name of junior colleges to community colleges.

1975

Legislature changes name of state colleges to state universities.

Legislature considers, but does not pass, proposal to create a superboard as new governance structure in place of the board of regents, state university board and community college board.

Legislature changes name of HECC to Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

1981

HECB recommends creation of a new state board to govern community colleges, AVTIs, and technical colleges of University of Minnesota.

1983

Legislature establishes new AVTI governing board separate from department of education.

Legislature requires community and technical colleges located in close proximity to develop plans for cooperation and sharing of resources.

As part of adopting funding changes, legislature strengthens authority of all governing boards over allocations to campuses, carryover of funds, campus reorganizations and closings.

1984

Governor's commission recommends that governing boards should actively pursue the possibility of merging institutions but should not close any institutions.

1986

Legislature authorizes a task force to study and report on the feasibility of a community college at Fond du Lac.

Technical institute system begins plans for restructuring all curriculum to a "course-based" delivery system where students are given credits for courses taken, as in traditional academic programs. All institutes will convert to courses in FY 89.

1988

Legislature mandates study on alternative governance in two year public institutions.

Legislature creates regent candidate advisory council to aid legislature by recommending strong regent candidates.

Legislature establishes a 2 + 2 at Arrowhead Community College.

1989

State university board establishes campus in Akita, Japan.

Legislature changes name of technical institutes to technical colleges.

1991

Legislature authorizes membership in Midwest Higher Education Compact.

Technical college board proposes plan to merge its campuses into a regional structure.

Legislature reorganizes structure of higher education by merging the state universities, community colleges and technical colleges under a new governing board.

1992

U of M proposes changing the Crookston campus from a two year technical college into a four year campus.

Access

1950

Governor's commission states that every qualified student who earnestly seeks a college education should have a public or private campus within commuting distance or state financial aid necessary to move away.

Governor's commission suggests adult education in junior colleges should be expanded since these schools are readily accessible to area residents. It should be funded, in some instances, by state aid.

Governor's commission recommends regional junior colleges should be established in educationally "barren" areas of the state.

General College was established to provide for students who would attend college for only a year or two. Commission states must continue it since there are no junior colleges in the Twin Cities.

1963

Liaison committee recommends basis for decisions about new campuses: 1) none within 35 miles of any existing college, excluding the Twin Cities 2) none in town of less than 5000 3) none unless 4000+ 9-12 grade students within 35 miles 4) exceptions for geographically isolated.

Instead of new campuses, should: 1) establish extension centers 2) examine possibility of reciprocity 3) put advanced placement in high schools 4) improve transfers.

Liaison committee rejects hierarchical admission policy to preserve all opportunities for all students.

1965

Liaison and facilities commission suggests every Minnesota high school graduate should have a realistic opportunity to succeed at an institution of higher education.

Liaison and facilities commission finds need to locate two junior colleges in the southwest. If need is demonstrated by enrollment, one of the southwest two year colleges might become a four year college.

Preliminary negotiations on reciprocity agreements begin.

1969

HECC adopts policy that public post-secondary institutes should be located within 35 miles of every Minnesota community of 5000 or more. A public institution with at least the first two years of college should be located within 20 miles of every Minnesota community of 10,000 or more.

1971

HECC recommends establishing a junior college in St. Paul, a state college by 1980 in the Twin Cites, and an AVTI in East Grand Forks.

HECC states that a junior college should be established in St. Paul -- as U of M shifts emphasis from lower to upper division the need for more metropolitan lower division opportunities will be critical.

HECC states that a state college for 5000 upper and 3000 lower division students should be established in metropolitan area.

1973
HECC suggests establishing a junior college in St. Paul is both feasible and desirable.

1983
Legislature adopts a new and expanded state grant program and state loan program.

1984
Andersen Commission recommends increasing the number of citizens who participate in higher education.

1989
HECB recommends in MSPAN 1 that more aid be available for part-time and working adults, more practitioner based graduate programs in business and engineering be offered, and course offerings and scheduling be made to meet the needs of adults.

1990
Legislature expands interstate tuition reciprocity to include Manitoba.

Quality

1950

Governor's commission finds that new teaching techniques, beyond traditional lectures, must be developed that involve greater student participation and improve effective expression and critical thinking skills.

Governor's commission recommends more emphasis must be placed on education outcomes, such as: understanding and skills in social/civic affairs, career goals/abilities, more balanced personal development.

1969

HECC finds Minnesota colleges and universities are generally effective but the need for improvement on some factors of quality is evident.

1985

Legislature allows permanent university fund income to be used by U of M as matching money for private funds to endow chairs.

1987

Pilot quality assessment projects begin in each system through HECB.

1989

State University System begins initiative (Q7) to provide for higher quality education in the system.

1991

Legislature establishes academic excellence scholarships for talented high school graduates to be funded through the sale of collegiate license plates.

Funding and Financial Aid

1950

Governor's commission suggests legislature should provide state aid to supplement local money for junior colleges and share the capital costs.

1956

Gale commission recommends that the state appropriate funds for a state scholarship program based on student's financial need

1959

Liaison committee recommends that a program of student loans, scholarships, or work-study grants should be developed to enable needy Minnesota youth to obtain post-high school education

1961

Legislature restricts junior college aid payments to those districts with colleges located more than 35 miles apart.

1967

Legislature creates the Minnesota State Scholarship program

1969

Legislature creates the Minnesota State Grant-in-Aid Program

HECC recommends legislature and governor should consider establishing a more sophisticated budgeting system for higher education reflecting differential costs of instruction for various programs/levels and functions (research, public service, etc.).

1975

HECC states that all degree credit bearing instruction should be subject to the same evaluation standards and be subsidized in the same proportion to costs.

Legislature creates Minnesota State Work-Study Program

1977

Legislature creates Minnesota Part-Time Student Grant Program

1983

Legislature changes funding and tuition policies to reflect cost of instruction at different levels with the state paying 2/3 of the cost and systems covering the remaining portion through tuition or other sources.

Legislature expands State Grant Program substantially with adoption of shared responsibility plan and adopts student loan program (SELF)

1985

Legislature enacts fellowship program for U of M graduate students

1987

Legislature funds expansion of upper division programs at Metro State.

Legislature supports U of M plan to reduce undergraduate enrollment by removing that system from average cost funding.

1989

Legislature creates child care grant program

1991

Legislature excludes non-resident, non-reciprocity students from enrollment under average cost funding and reduces subsidy for off-campus students to a level closer to actual cost.

Legislature establishes task force on post-secondary funding to develop a new funding formula.

Legislature sets a maximum enrollment for funding purposes at the state universities, community colleges, and technical colleges.

1991

Legislature enacts several health care grant and loan programs for rural doctors and nurses

1992

Legislature changes definition of full-time, for financial aid purposes, from 12 credits to 15 credits.

Legislature combines part-time and full-time grant programs

K-12 Linkages

1950

Governor's commission finds most preparation requirements were dropped to deal with post war influx; secondary schools should use this opportunity to diversify their curriculum.

Governor's commission states that department of education should assume major responsibility for closer articulation of K-12 with colleges.

1956

Gale commission recommends legislature should provide adequate K-12 funding for improvement, including upgrading counseling for students to make good post-secondary choices.

1985

Legislature adopts post-secondary enrollment options act to allow 11th and 12th graders to attend post-secondary institutions at state expense.

Legislature provides funding for improved post-high school planning services in the secondary schools.

1987

Legislature funds enhanced admissions counseling through U of M to improve prospective students' understanding of enrollment options and their likelihood for college success.

1992

Levi commission recommends: 1) establishing better cooperation between K-12 and colleges 2) more rigorous high school graduation standards to decrease the need for remedial education 3) preparation standards in two year colleges with a tuition reduction for students who meet standards.